

U.S. Department of Education
2012 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program
A Non-Public School - 12PV80

School Type (Public Schools): ☐ Charter ☐ Title 1 ☐ Magnet ☐ Choice
(Check all that apply, if any)

Name of Principal: Dr. William Ford

Official School Name: Saint Thomas Aquinas High School

School Mailing Address: 11411 Pflumm Road
Overland Park, KS 66215-4816

County: Johnson State School Code Number*: 9020

Telephone: (913) 319-2404 E-mail: wpford@stasaints.net

Fax: (913) 345-2319 Web site/URL: www.stasaints.net

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent*: Dr. Kathy O'Hara Superintendent e-mail: kohara@archkckcs.org

District Name: Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas District Phone: (913) 647-0321

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mr. Thomas Quick

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date _____

**Non-Public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and emailed to Aba Kumi, Blue Ribbon Schools Project Manager (aba.kumi@ed.gov) or mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

12PV80

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2011-2012 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take foreign language courses.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2006.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 or 2011.
7. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
8. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
9. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
10. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT

Questions 1 and 2 are for Public Schools only.

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located: Suburban

4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 14

5. Number of students as of October 1, 2011 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total			# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0		6	0	0	0
K	0	0	0		7	0	0	0
1	0	0	0		8	0	0	0
2	0	0	0		9	125	121	246
3	0	0	0		10	109	120	229
4	0	0	0		11	112	136	248
5	0	0	0		12	115	141	256
Total in Applying School:								979

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native
1 % Asian
1 % Black or African American
5 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
92 % White
0 % Two or more races
100 % Total

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2010-2011 school year: 2%

This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

(1)	Number of students who transferred to the school after October 1, 2010 until the end of the school year.	14
(2)	Number of students who transferred from the school after October 1, 2010 until the end of the school year.	6
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	20
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2010	1001
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.02
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	2

8. Percent of English Language Learners in the school: 0%

Total number of ELL students in the school: 0

Number of non-English languages represented: 0

Specify non-English languages:

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 3%

Total number of students who qualify: 28

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

Saint Thomas Aquinas High School does not participate in the Federal Hot Lunch Program. The cafeteria is sub-contracted to an outside vendor. The rate calculated for free and reduced students shown is based on the IRS 1040 submitted by families who applied for financial assistance for the 2011-12 school year. The family income and size were compared to the income/family size guidelines from USDA for the program.

10. Percent of students receiving special education services: 5%

Total number of students served: 46

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>0</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>10</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>30</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>1</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>3</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>48</u>	<u>9</u>
Resource teachers/specialists (e.g., reading specialist, media specialist, art/music, PE teachers, etc.)	<u>11</u>	<u>2</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Support staff (e.g., school secretaries, custodians, cafeteria aides, etc.)	<u>20</u>	<u>9</u>
Total number	<u>83</u>	<u>20</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1: 18:1

13. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Daily student attendance	94%	95%	98%	97%	97%
High school graduation rate	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

14. **For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools):**

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2011 are doing as of Fall 2011.

Graduating class size:	<u>268</u>
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	<u>95%</u>
Enrolled in a community college	<u>4%</u>
Enrolled in vocational training	<u>0%</u>
Found employment	<u>0%</u>
Military service	<u>1%</u>
Other	<u>0%</u>
Total	<u>100%</u>

15. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award:

☒ No

☐ Yes

If yes, what was the year of the award?

Saint Thomas Aquinas High School

“A Communion of Saints: Growing in Knowledge, Guided by Catholic Values”

Saint Thomas Aquinas High School is a Catholic Faith Community serving members of the nineteen Catholic parishes of Johnson County, Kansas, and beyond. The current student population stands at 979. With a broad and varied range of distinctive programs and services, Saint Thomas Aquinas High School is a welcoming community that inspires young people and prepares them to live faith-filled lives of responsible citizenship and service.

The Mission of Saint Thomas Aquinas High School as a Catholic Faith Community is to challenge and nurture young men and women to develop their God-given spiritual, intellectual, social, and physical potential, and to help them become life-long learners and responsible citizens guided by Catholic values.

Core Values:

- Faith
- Excellence, emphasizing life-long learning
- Service
- Community

Beliefs:

- As a Catholic Faith Community we believe:
- Our actions and teachings need to reflect Jesus' life and be consistent with Catholic tradition.
- Students must be encouraged to strive for excellence.
- Students must be encouraged to develop moral courage and integrity.
- Students must be encouraged to pursue the fulfillment of their God-given potential and to promote that fulfillment in others.
- Learning is a life-long process; therefore, the ability and desire to obtain knowledge is as important as the knowledge itself.
- Teachers, students and parents work best in a climate of mutual respect and cooperation.

Ideals:

- The ideals that should be promoted in our Catholic Faith Community are:
- A personal relationship with God
- Respect for self and others
- Accountability
- The interdependence of society
- Acceptance and appreciation of diversity
- Community service

Although the commitment to and understanding of the school's mission statement, values, beliefs and ideals are important, the Saint Thomas Aquinas community recognizes it is even more important that the mission manifests itself in the actions modeled every day. A Saint Thomas Aquinas High School education nurtures the God-given gifts of all students, helping them to develop a close relationship with Jesus Christ. Taught by a committed faculty in a faith-based and nurturing environment, each young person is provided with the tools for academic achievement along with the reinforcement and continuing formation of their Catholic faith.

Saint Thomas Aquinas High School offers a rigorous and demanding curriculum and a wide array of activities that challenges young people of all abilities and prepares them for success in college and in life. Although 99 to 100% of graduates continue their education in college, students of all academic abilities are challenged and nurtured. Saint Thomas Aquinas High School has been honored to receive the Governor's Achievement Award from the Kansas State Board of Education four times (2006, 2007, 2010, 2011), which recognizes the schools that score in the top 5% of all high schools in the state on the Kansas State Assessments in both math and reading. It is the only parochial school in the state to be recognized at least four times. Since 2000, the school has been recognized as a Kansas School of Excellence in reading (10 times) and math (12 times), as well as in social studies, writing and science. Saint Thomas Aquinas has the highest "meets standard" and above test scores in Kansas City (Kansas) on the 2011 Kansas State Assessments. Since 2002, it has had 34 National Merit Finalists and 89 National Merit Commended Scholars. In the graduating Class of 2011, 63 students were recognized as Kansas Scholars, given to those with a GPA of more than 3.9 and an ACT Composite of over 30.

The service and retreat programs allow the spiritual life to come alive. The service program at Saint Thomas Aquinas has been recognized throughout the community and stands not only as a core value but also as a hallmark of a Saint Thomas Aquinas High School education. Last fall, it was the first high school in the city recognized by the "Souper Bowl" organization for its work on behalf of the hungry in Kansas City. Both students and staff participate whole-heartedly in endeavors such as the canned food drive (the 2011 canned food drive donation generated close to 114,000 items for the Catholic Charities' food pantry), the penny drive on behalf of the center city Catholic school families, the adoption of families at Christmas and the "Walk for Life," which demonstrates the school's stance as a pro-life community. Many students choose to participate in mission trips over spring break and through those activities develop a true sense of their unique place in society and the diversity in the world around them. During the 2010-2011 school year, over 800 service agencies were served by the students of Saint Thomas Aquinas through the service program.

In addition to academic success and service participation, the extra-curricular program is very strong. Saint Thomas Aquinas High School activities and athletics have enjoyed unrivaled success, culminating in state titles in everything from baseball to debate and forensics to scholar's bowl and soccer. In fact, the 70th state title in the school's twenty-four years was won this fall.

1. Assessment Results:

Question 1A

Performance levels for the ACT and Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) tests are reported as scale scores and RIT scores respectively. Performance levels on the Kansas State Assessments are measured in 5 tiers (in order from lowest to highest): “academic warning,” “approaches standard,” “meets standard,” “exceeds standard,” and “exemplary.” For the Kansas State Assessments, “meets standard” is considered “proficient” for adequate yearly progress calculations, and “exceeds standard” and “exemplary” are considered “better than proficient.”

On the MAP test (administered to ninth graders), students are expected to achieve a RIT score of 234 or higher on the mathematics sub-test and a RIT score of 217 or higher on the reading sub-test. Those numbers correspond with research provided by the Northwest Evaluation Association which indicates a student’s likelihood of achieving a passing score on the Kansas State Assessments when paired with his/her MAP score.

The Kansas State Assessments are administered throughout the state to each student no later than the end of the junior year (senior year for portions of history/government), but not before they have had an “opportunity to learn” the material covered in the standards. Students are expected to score at “meets standard” or better.

On the ACT test, students are expected to score as well as they can, and are intrinsically motivated to do so as 99 to 100% of graduates continue their education at a college or university.

Question 1B

The general trend in all data is upward and shows an improvement in scores not only during the last five years but throughout the last decade as well.

The ACT trend is positive in not only the reading and math data but also in all sub-tests and the composite score. For example, prior to 2005, the average ACT math score was above 23 only once. Since then, scores have been above 23 every year and above 24 once.

The Kansas State Assessment data shows that the students are grasping concepts needed to be successful when judged against state standards. On the state reading assessment, the number of students performing in the lowest two categories has decreased, resulting in no student scoring in the lowest tier on the most recent tests. At the same time, the number of students in the top two tiers has increased, with 48% in the highest category, 85.9% in the top two, and 99.6% of our students rated as proficient or better for the 2011 cohort. On the state math assessment, the number of students scoring in the lowest two categories has decreased, with no student scoring in the lowest category on the most recent tests. The number of students scoring in the top tiers has also improved, with 35.1% at the highest level, 71.3% in the top two levels, and the number of students scoring proficient or better has risen to 98.9% (up from 85.7% five years ago).

The Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) data shows an improvement in both math and reading every year since the test was implemented in the 2006-2007 school year. The MAP reading scores have increased by 5 points over the last 5 years, and the math scores have improved by 6.7 points during the same time frame.

The upward trends in assessment data all coincide with the implementation of a results-based decision making model implemented during the most recent school improvement cycle. In order to accomplish the goals set forth, the faculty worked to determine the knowledge required of the students and set forth a process for measuring whether students knew the required information. They also established systems helping students grasp that knowledge they had not grasped already.

The faculty participated in curriculum reviews, identified skills and knowledge that needed more emphasis, and developed strategies to ensure they were covered. The assessment program was re-aligned to make sure it was measuring what was being taught, to make sure the results were relevant and timely, and to provide meaningful information. The timing of the administration of the state assessments was modified to occur after students had the opportunity to learn the information rather than at the end of a certain year to give them a chance to demonstrate their skills. The administration of the MAP test to all freshmen helped to identify those who needed early intervention and to provide baseline data on their cohort group. This step was important as the freshmen typically come from more than 25 different grade schools/junior highs. Finally, the Enhanced Learning Opportunity (ELO) program was implemented to help students who exhibit a need to more completely develop their skill set in order to become successful as they proceeded through their high school years.

The academic progress of all students is tracked at multiple points to make sure they are progressing appropriately. If, at any point they are not, they are directed toward the ELO program or toward a class level most beneficial to them. By addressing the needs of the individual, it is expected that the sub-group will also improve.

2. Using Assessment Results:

The use of assessment data to improve student and program performance begins prior to a student's first day at Saint Thomas Aquinas High School. Students take the EXPLORE test in January of their eighth grade year, and results are used by the academic counseling staff to determine which courses will offer the most challenge to each student yet allow him/her to be successful at the same time. The results of the EXPLORE test and the corresponding recommendations are communicated to parents and incoming students at enrollment sessions in February.

The importance of gathering the baseline data on in-coming students is crucial because the student population matriculates from more than 25 different grade schools/ junior highs. The MAP data is aligned to the state assessments and produces a picture of where the incoming students stand in relation to future adequate yearly progress (AYP) determinations. In addition, the need exists to identify those students who have not yet grasped the skills necessary to be successful in their high school course work.

The MAP test is used to identify those students early in their high school career. Students who do not meet the necessary scores are placed in the ELO program until they demonstrate proficiency on those core skills. By examining the RIT scores of the students in the ELO program, scores can be cross-referenced with an itemized breakdown of content and instruction can be differentiated to meet the specific needs of that student or group of students. The MAP test also provides data that indicates whether the ELO program is performing as desired or if changes need to be made.

The Kansas State Assessments are used to calculate AYP and program effectiveness. Data is disseminated within departments and with the faculty as a whole. The faculty participates in item analysis of the assessment results and determines plans to make sure sufficient coverage is given to topics on which the students exhibit a less than thorough understanding.

Students are also administered the Assessment of Catholic Religious Education (ACRE) test at the beginning of the freshman year and at the end of the senior year. The data provided shows whether students understand the basic tenets of the Catholic faith.

Since 99 to 100% of the graduates of Saint Thomas Aquinas High School pursue post-secondary education at a university or college, one of the central goals from an educational standpoint is to make sure students are prepared for the course work presented at the university level. Use of the EXPLORE/PLAN/ACT battery of tests helps the faculty and staff gain an understanding as to whether the students are demonstrating college readiness.

Information regarding assessment scores is disseminated within the community through a variety of methods. Data pertaining to the school as a whole is communicated in parent newsletters and via the web page. It becomes part of the school profile and is shared with prospective students. Individual student data is also made available to parents and students. Much of the individual data is either handed to or mailed home to the parents and students.

Contributing to the usability of the data is the timely manner in which many of the results are returned. The base MAP data (RIT score ranges) is available immediately upon completion of the test, with complete reports of the data available to the faculty and students within 24 hours. A student's state assessment performance category is available as soon as he/she completes the assessment, with a report detailing how both the student and aggregate performed on each assessed indicator available at the close of the testing window.

3. Sharing Lessons Learned:

The teachers at Saint Thomas Aquinas High School believe that going outside the walls of the building is an important part of the educational process. The teachers and students share their time and talent in a variety of ways. As an example, students and teachers work directly with the area's Catholic grade school student. This work forms a cohesive partnership while also allowing students to give back to the community. While at the schools, the students tutor and assist grade school students with their academic work.

Many teachers and administrators work on accreditation visiting teams through the Advanc-Ed process. Through this process, they observe, share and provide targeted feedback to another community as the schools evaluate themselves in a five year process. This targeted discussion allows Saint Thomas Aquinas faculty to share what has worked for them and learn from other educators.

Several teachers have also presented at conferences. For example, English teachers have presented at the National Council of Teachers of English Conference (NCTE) for the last two years. This past year they presented on graphic novels, mythology, Native American literature, and literature surrounding the Holocaust. In fact, one of the English teachers is a national leader in the Holocaust education and takes her students to Washington, D.C., every year to explore this topic at the national Holocaust Museum.

4. Engaging Families and Communities:

As stated in the belief statements, "Teachers, students and parents work best in a climate of mutual respect and cooperation." There is a real sentiment throughout the community that working with high school students is a much more difficult task than it was even a decade ago. It is felt that by working together, parents and teachers can accomplish what is necessary to help students succeed in all aspects of their lives.

Varied strategies are used to open the line of communication with not only parents but also the community to advance the mission of Saint Thomas Aquinas High School. In advancing the academic mission, the most significant tool incorporated in the past two years is the adoption of grading software, which provides parents and students "real time" access to their progress in the classroom. Each fall the parents are invited to an evening workshop that teaches them how to access their child's grade. Beyond simply outlining the protocol, the guidance and administrative staff provides suggestions on how to work with the young person and teachers once the information is received. Every parent, as well as every

student, has access to student progress up to the minute the grade is recorded by the teacher. This provides instant communication between the teaching staff and the parent and encourages an ongoing dialogue between teachers and parents.

To supplement the above, Parent-Teacher conferences are held during the mid-term of each semester. In the fall, Back-to-School night provides an opportunity to meet with the faculty and allows the parents the opportunity to hear the expectations for each class. These give systemic opportunities for teachers and parents to meet and discuss the student's progress.

In addition, understanding that destructive behaviors impact learning, in the fall and again in the spring semester, each student involved in any extra-curricular activity is exposed to a community program which teaches them about the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse and other detrimental behaviors. As a part of the program all parents are required to attend one of the evening sessions specifically designed for them concerning the same issues presented during the in-school student session.

The parent newsletter is posted online monthly for all parents and our community. The newsletter provides not only a snapshot of things to know, but also communicates the expectations for the climate and culture of the school.

1. Curriculum:

Saint Thomas Aquinas High School believes in high expectations for all students; consequently, the design of the curriculum matches this belief. The curriculum is based on the Kansas State Standards and is approved by the Kansas State Board of Regents and thus, demonstrates that a student would be ready for the next level of education based on their high school curriculum. All students are required to take 28 credit hours to graduate in four years. Each student must take 4 credits of Theology; 4 credits of English Language Arts; 3 credits of Mathematics; 3 credits of Science; 3 credits of Social Science; 2 credits of a modern foreign language (German, Spanish, or French) plus 1 credit of Latin or 4 credits of a modern foreign language; 1 credit of Physical Education/Health; 1 credit of Fine Arts; 1 credit of Computer Technology; and 1 credit of Catholic Outreach. Students must also complete 3.5 credits of electives and 100 service hours.

The curriculum provides opportunities for students with wide ranging abilities. For example, within the math curriculum, freshman students can enroll into one of seven different levels of courses based on their ability from basic Pre-Algebra to Honors Algebra 2. A student can graduate from Saint Thomas Aquinas High School having taken Calculus 2. Students can earn college credit through Johnson County Community College in areas of math, science, foreign language and English. Along with the community college credit, many of many students earn college credit through the Advanced Placement exams.

As all students are required to successfully complete at least three years of a foreign language to graduate, Saint Thomas Aquinas High School is in compliance with the Blue Ribbon School's foreign language requirements. Spanish, French, German and Latin are all offered to students, with a fifth year taught in Spanish, German and French.

A challenging honors program is taught across all curricular areas to meet the needs of the high potential students. The curriculum is also adjusted to meet the needs of the students who are at risk academically. A Guided Studies course is provided to help meet the needs of the students who struggle with adjusting to the academic demands of high school. Most departments have "introductory" courses in which the class sizes are intentionally kept low for more individual attention.

In addition to the curriculum, Saint Thomas Aquinas has one staff member certified in Special Education who is dedicated to the Guided Studies students. This teacher implements the 504 plans for diagnosed individuals and leads the Student Intervention Team (SIT) to evaluate students who have been referred by a classroom teacher. The ELO program has been developed to help students who have been identified by the MAP test as performing low in the curricular areas of reading and math. Taught by two teachers from the math department and a literacy specialist, these students are provided individualized sessions to practice basic reading and math skills.

A variety of courses is offered for a student's different interests. Students explore the truths and traditions of their Catholic faith to help find the deeper meaning of life through Theology classes. Saint Thomas Aquinas High School offers opportunities in the Fine Arts, including instrumental and vocal music and theater, a "We the People" constitution course, forensics and debate, drafting, the Cisco Technology Academy, and family and consumer sciences.

Teachers work in academic departments to align their curriculum with the Kansas curricular standards and to address the majority of curricular and instructional issues. Within academic departments, teachers of the same courses collaborate to assure the students are provided the same curriculum and assessed over the same material. Teachers also use standardized test scores to evaluate our curriculum every year. The MAP, the Kansas State Assessment results, the ACRE, and the ACT battery are all used in the annual

evaluation of the curriculum. Based on these instruments, there is a targeted focus on the weak areas and a strategy developed on ways to emphasize these areas in the upcoming school year.

2. Reading/English:

The goal of the Language Arts Department is to provide students opportunities and encouragement to develop language skills. To this end, all students take four years of English/Language Arts (English I, World Literature, American Literature, two composition courses and English IV) and may enroll in additional elective courses within the department. Study in every course focuses on core outcomes in the areas of thinking, reading, writing, listening, viewing and visually representing—the fundamentals of human interaction. Students in preparing to use language effectively in a variety of situations, not only practice close, attentive reading to understand and enjoy literature, but also to form habits in order to read critically as they process information available in print and non-print media. The literature approach is genre based, and from the literature, students progress to writing, small and large group discussions and multi-media projects. From in-class essays to multi-media research papers and from writing contest pieces to college admittance essays, students write for a variety of situations and audiences. In the honors program, students have an increased reading load, complete a more extensive study of vocabulary, participate in independent and self-designed projects, and prepare for the AP exams at the end of junior and senior years.

Since the students come from over 25 different schools, all freshmen take the MAP test at the beginning of the school year to assess their reading proficiency. Those students who do not meet the minimum standard participate in ELO during seminar and retake the assessment after a specified period of study. Likewise, juniors whose scores are below the proficient level on the Kansas reading assessment attend the ELO class to focus on strengthening specific reading skills and to prepare for a retake of the test second semester.

3. Mathematics:

The goal of the Mathematics Department is to match the ability of the student with the correct course level to in order to challenge every student from the freshman year on. The students are engaged in the math curriculum before they enter the building as freshmen. Test-out opportunities in Geometry and Algebra are provided for students who want to enroll in a more advanced level. Results from the test-out, teacher recommendations and parent requests are used to appropriately place the students in one of seven different courses ranging from Pre-Algebra to Honors Algebra 2 in order to help them experience success.

Students identified as having a deficit in the mathematical knowledge base they need, as indicated by the state standards, receive extra help through the ELO program. These students are usually enrolled in the Pre-Algebra course to build a solid Algebra foundation necessary for future success. Also, juniors who have already scored below the "meets standard" level on the Kansas math assessment attend the ELO program before they retake the assessment.

Even though three years of math are required, currently 96% of seniors take a fourth year of math. After four years of math instruction, the students are prepared whether they only need one math course or they intend to become a math major in college. The honors math students find the challenging courses they need through the five courses offered for college and/or AP credit.

The teachers for each course work toward consistency. For example, those teaching Geometry plan their classes together and give the same tests and assignments. This enables teachers to systemically collaborate in order to create the best courses possible for the students and meet their individual needs. Material learned one year is incorporated into the following course. For example, in the context of Geometry, students are required to solve quadratic equations, a skill learned in Algebra 1 that will be needed in Algebra 2 and College Algebra. This allows a seamless connection from year to year.

Teachers are available for help outside of class time to assist students. Due to block scheduling, it is important to be available outside of class so students can work on math on a consistent basis. Teachers also make use of technology by posting lessons online so students can reference class material.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

Science

The goal of the Science Department is to provide an opportunity for success for students of all ability levels in each of the 11 science courses. Even though Biology, Chemistry and Physics (or Earth and Space) are graduation requirements, most seniors also take a fourth science course, including a college biology course for college credit through Johnson County Community College.

The teachers are committed and dedicated to both faith and reason and teach science to advance the Mission Statement: to help students reach their God-given potential by becoming teachers, doctors, engineers and researchers, to become life-long learners because science knowledge changes every day with consequences important to individual health and well-being, and to become responsible citizens by having the ability to provide qualified and ethical leadership in meeting the needs of their communities.

The curriculum is aligned with the Kansas State Science Standards. Each standard is coordinated with the Kansas State Assessments. These standards are evaluated each year by the teachers in individual areas to make certain the curriculum is properly aligned and covered.

To address the needs for incoming freshmen who do not yet have the skill level to enter the freshman Biology I course, the Earth and Space Science course was implemented in 2010. In a smaller class environment, these freshmen can now learn science process skills along with the broader reading, math, study and test taking skills necessary for success in high school science.

All teaching in the Science Department is lab-based, encouraging students to take ownership of their own learning. For all students needing additional course help, teachers in biology, chemistry and physics each have a “lab seminar” where students can get help and make up labs and tests within the school day.

In addition, the Science Professions Club and St. Albert Science Club are open to all students interested in science. Before school once a month, a science professional is invited to speak to students about his/her profession. These sessions regularly draw 80-100 students. St. Albert Science Club builds and practices competition events and this year visited the Louisburg Powell Observatory with a grant from Time Warner’s *Connect a Million Minds Initiative*. Members also provide service for freshman orientation and the 8th Grade Open House chemistry demonstrations.

5. Instructional Methods:

Saint Thomas Aquinas High School addresses the needs of a diverse group of learners in a variety of ways. The courses and programs are taught emphasizing differentiated instruction to reach every learner, from those with learning difficulties to the academically gifted.

Students with academic challenges are offered courses with small class sizes, providing individual attention. They also benefit from a resource room and Guided Studies instruction, which helps them develop study skills and habits that increase the likelihood they will be successful as they move forward. The ELO program addresses any core academic needs they have in reading and math. Students with 504 plans are provided appropriate accommodations such as extended test-taking time, help with notes and technological aides that support their learning based on their specific disability.

Students are challenged with a rigorous college-preparatory curriculum. Access to college level courses

and AP opportunities allow students to leave Saint Thomas Aquinas High School with college credit. Summer coursework is offered for some prerequisites to be completed, thereby opening room in the students' schedules for more electives in their areas of interest or advanced study. In addition, students are offered the opportunity to take courses that lead to CISCO network certification.

Students are encouraged to share what they have learned with the community. The Science Outreach program takes students to area grade schools where they share the excitement and wonder of science experiments. The "We the People" students demonstrate their understanding of the United States Constitution through state and national competitions. The CISCO Academy students have gone to area schools and put together their local networks, specifically for the Catholic schools with limited resources in the center city.

Wireless technology has been a part of the Saint Thomas Aquinas High School educational environment since 2000. As a result, technology is woven into every discipline in order to support student achievement. Every teacher is supplied with a tablet computer and access to a virtual classroom. The computers allow the use of multimedia to enrich subject matter. They also allow teachers to post notes and assignments and communicate with their students and their parents through cyberspace. Multiple laptop carts and three dedicated labs allow teachers to bring technology into their own classroom at any time.

6. Professional Development:

The belief that a high functioning faculty will result in higher achieving students is practiced at Saint Thomas Aquinas High School. More than 70% of our faculty have a master's degree or higher. The administration encourages and supports teachers to attend conferences and bring research-based strategies back to the classroom. Not only do teachers bring back information from conferences, but teachers bring topics of interest to present at conferences. For example, four English teachers presented at the NCTE conference this past year.

All new staff is provided with mentoring and required staff development to help them acclimate to the expectations of Saint Thomas Aquinas High School. The Academic Principal and one of the Chairs of the School Improvement Committee are charged with providing new staff with the tools needed to be a successful teacher at Saint Thomas Aquinas High School. Every teacher develops an individual set of goals before each school year as part of the staff development and evaluation process. The administrators meet with teachers three times a year to discuss the progress toward their goals. At the end of the school year, the administration evaluates faculty members based on their goals. This is a process that was developed by and for the faculty several years ago, with modifications made occasionally to help meet their needs and provide accountability and equity for all staff.

When appropriate and in conjunction with the school improvement process, school-wide goals are established with the expectation that teachers will work on these established goals for the school year in addition to their personal goals. If a critical mass of faculty members establishes the same or similar goals for their personal goals for the year, these become the impetus for staff development throughout the year if appropriate.

Once a month, the faculty and staff come together as a faith community. As a priority of staff development, Faculty Faith Formation program places an emphasis on the Catholic values and teachings that serve as the foundation of Saint Thomas Aquinas High School. Not only do the faculty and staff gather as a faith community, but they also come together as a professional learning community to share and to explore the data that represents the current academic reality. The main goal is not only to have the faculty become informed but also to look for trends and areas of improvement. This time is also used to discuss issues of culture and climate as well as other appropriate events of the community.

7. School Leadership:

The administrative structure of Saint Thomas Aquinas High School incorporates a President and two Principals, each with specific duties to help manage the day-to-day operations of the school. All three members of the leadership team hold doctorates in education. The President reports to a 14-member Board of Trustees appointed by the Archbishop of Kansas City in Kansas, which meets eight times a year. Internally, both Principals work directly with the President.

As a matter of protocol, any policy or procedure relevant to school operations that would significantly alter the school's culture or climate is vetted by the President and presented to the Board of Trustees for endorsement.

Internally, any policy or procedure that impacts the day-to-day operations of the school, including curriculum review, student achievement issues and/or the teaching-learning process, is generally proposed in consultation with the faculty. These are then more fully developed during faculty meetings, school improvement team meetings or ad hoc committees of relevant personnel. Implementation is approved by the President.

The leadership team, including the President, meets with the Department Heads on a monthly basis. Making extensive use of the Kansas State Assessments, the ACT/SAT battery and any other data deemed significant to determine academic effectiveness, the leadership work together with the Department Heads and individual faculty in shaping curriculum to better meet the needs of the students. Each teacher is empowered to suggest and develop unique programs to enhance the curriculum.

Additionally, the School Improvement Committee (SIC) is an instrumental and significant group comprised of faculty members and administrative representatives. The SIC is empowered to provide input and proposals that will have an impact on the learning of young people. Two faculty members are given classroom relief and an extended contract to drive the school improvement process throughout the school year on an ongoing basis.

Also, the Student Intervention Team, comprised of faculty, guidance staff and the Director of Students with Special Needs, has the specific responsibility of monitoring expectations for young people in order to insure each can be successful. Upon referral, each student struggling in the classroom is evaluated and, if appropriate, learning accommodations are suggested and implemented in consultation with the student, parent and relevant teachers.

Through the staff development budget, teachers are encouraged to take advantage of opportunities presented by their professional groups and other workshops that will increase their skills and help drive innovation. As a matter of practice, all administrators have a drop-in open door policy for faculty, parents and students.

PART VI - PRIVATE SCHOOL ADDENDUM

12PV80

1. Private school association: Catholic

2. Does the school have nonprofit, tax-exempt (501(c)(3) status? Yes

3. What are the 2011-2012 tuition rates, by grade? (Do not include room, board, or fees.)

<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>
K	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$7475</u>	<u>\$7475</u>	<u>\$7475</u>
6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th
<u>\$7475</u>	<u>\$0</u>				
12th	Other				

4. What is the educational cost per student? (School budget divided by enrollment) \$8587

5. What is the average financial aid per student? \$3244

6. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction?
10%

7. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction? 24%

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 11 Test: Kansas State Assessment

Edition/Publication Year: 2007/2008/2009/2010/2011

Publisher: CETE

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets Standard/Exceeds Standard/Exemplary	99	94	87	92	82
Exceeds Standard/Exemplary	71	59	55	53	52
Number of students tested	265	271	289	286	348
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Meets Standard/Exceeds Standard/Exemplary					
Exceeds Standard/Exemplary					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Meets Standard/Exceeds Standard/Exemplary					
Exceeds Standard/Exemplary					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets Standard/Exceeds Standard/Exemplary		85			
Exceeds Standard/Exemplary		69			
Number of students tested		13			
4. Special Education Students					
Meets Standard/Exceeds Standard/Exemplary	100	60	63	80	58
Exceeds Standard/Exemplary	36	30	32	40	33
Number of students tested	11	10	19	10	12
5. English Language Learner Students					
Meets Standard/Exceeds Standard/Exemplary					
Exceeds Standard/Exemplary					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Meets Standard/Exceeds Standard/Exemplary					
Exceeds Standard/Exemplary					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

12PV80

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 11 Test: Kansas State Assessment

Edition/Publication Year: 2007/2008/2009/2010/2011

Publisher: CETE

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets Standard/Exceeds Standard/Exemplary	100	100	95	94	96
Exceeds Standard/Exemplary	86	76	74	72	81
Number of students tested	256	266	277	273	339
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Meets Standard/Exceeds Standard/Exemplary					
Exceeds Standard/Exemplary					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Meets Standard/Exceeds Standard/Exemplary					
Exceeds Standard/Exemplary					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets Standard/Exceeds Standard/Exemplary	100				
Exceeds Standard/Exemplary	90				
Number of students tested	10				
4. Special Education Students					
Meets Standard/Exceeds Standard/Exemplary	100	100	74	80	58
Exceeds Standard/Exemplary	64	50	37	50	50
Number of students tested	11	10	19	10	12
5. English Language Learner Students					
Meets Standard/Exceeds Standard/Exemplary					
Exceeds Standard/Exemplary					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Meets Standard/Exceeds Standard/Exemplary					
Exceeds Standard/Exemplary					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

12PV80

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: Weighted Average

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month					
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets Standard/Exceeds Standard/Exemplary	99	94	87	92	82
Exceeds Standard/Exemplary	71	59	55	53	52
Number of students tested	265	271	289	286	348
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Meets Standard/Exceeds Standard/Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
Exceeds Standard/Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
2. African American Students					
Meets Standard/Exceeds Standard/Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
Exceeds Standard/Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets Standard/Exceeds Standard/Exemplary	0	85	0	0	0
Exceeds Standard/Exemplary	0	69	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	13	0	0	0
4. Special Education Students					
Meets Standard/Exceeds Standard/Exemplary	100	60	63	80	58
Exceeds Standard/Exemplary	36	30	32	40	33
Number of students tested	11	10	19	10	12
5. English Language Learner Students					
Meets Standard/Exceeds Standard/Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
Exceeds Standard/Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
6.					
Meets Standard/Exceeds Standard/Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
Exceeds Standard/Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
NOTES:					

12PV80

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: Weighted Average

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month					
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets Standard/Exceeds Standard/Exemplary	100	100	95	94	96
Exceeds Standard/Exemplary	86	76	74	72	81
Number of students tested	256	266	277	273	339
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Meets Standard/Exceeds Standard/Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
Exceeds Standard/Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
2. African American Students					
Meets Standard/Exceeds Standard/Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
Exceeds Standard/Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets Standard/Exceeds Standard/Exemplary	100	0	0	0	0
Exceeds Standard/Exemplary	90	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	10	0	0	0	0
4. Special Education Students					
Meets Standard/Exceeds Standard/Exemplary	100	100	74	80	58
Exceeds Standard/Exemplary	64	50	37	50	50
Number of students tested	11	10	19	10	12
5. English Language Learner Students					
Meets Standard/Exceeds Standard/Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
Exceeds Standard/Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
6.					
Meets Standard/Exceeds Standard/Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
Exceeds Standard/Exemplary	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
NOTES:					

12PV80

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 12

Test: ACT

Edition/Publication Year: 2011/2010/2009/2008/2007 Publisher: ACT Scores reported as: Scaled scores

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Average Score	24	23	24	24	23
Number of students tested	261	271	264	327	326
Percent of total students tested	100	98	98	97	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Average Score	24	24	22	21	20
Number of students tested	16	10	14	11	12
4. Special Education Students					
Average Score		22	23	23	
Number of students tested		19	10	10	
5. English Language Learner Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

12PV80

NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 12

Test: ACT

Edition/Publication Year: 2011/2010/2009/2008/2007 Publisher: ACT Scores reported as: Scaled scores

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Average Score	26	25	25	25	24
Number of students tested	261	271	264	327	326
Percent of total students tested	100	98	98	97	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Average Score	26	25	22	25	23
Number of students tested	16	10	14	11	12
4. Special Education Students					
Average Score		22	24	26	
Number of students tested		19	10	10	
5. English Language Learner Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

12PV80

NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 9

Test: Measures of
Academic Progress

Edition/Publication Year:
2007/2008/2009/2010/2011

Publisher: Northwest Evaluation Association
Scores reported as: Scaled
scores

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Average Score	254	255	252	252	247
Number of students tested	233	251	254	280	290
Percent of total students tested	99	98	94	99	98
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Average Score	239	247	244	242	239
Number of students tested	15	10	10	10	19
5. English Language Learner Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					
In 2010-2011, the group score for special education students was adversely effected by two scores who were both near 4 standard deviations below the mean.					

12PV80

NATIONAL NORMS-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 9

Test: Measures of
Academic Progress

Edition/Publication Year:
2007/2008/2009/2010/2011

Publisher: Northwest Evaluation Scores reported as: Scaled
Association scores

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Average Score	238	237	237	235	233
Number of students tested	230	253	259	282	284
Percent of total students tested	99	99	96	100	97
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
2. African American Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
Average Score	230	232	233	229	226
Number of students tested	15	10	10	10	19
5. English Language Learner Students					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

12PV80